



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: June 4, 2008

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item IX: Consideration of a resolution authorizing application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a grant of Proposition 84 funds for a program of minor capital outlay to ensure the preservation, protection and restoration of developed and natural resources within the Los Angeles River and Santa Monica Bay Watersheds.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a grant of Proposition 84 funds for a program of minor capital outlay to ensure the preservation, protection and restoration of developed and natural resources within the Los Angeles River and Santa Monica Bay Watersheds in the amount of \$400,000.

Background: As the Conservancy's land management cooperating agency, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) must actively care for the land by providing safety, resource protection, access and programs for public use. To continue to provide safe and enjoyable public access and a high quality experience in all the parks that it manages, the MRCA must ensure the facilities in them are not only maintained in good condition, but are actively improved as public use dictates. The funding in place for the ongoing long-term maintenance of MRCA parks is not sufficient to include the activities necessary to provide for the enhancement, restoration and improvement of these parks.

The purpose of the grant will be to undertake site improvements to in multiple parks within both watersheds to continue providing a high quality park experience for our visitors. These improvements will focus on site amenities including trails, benches, picnic tables, fencing, gates, signage, interpretive elements, drinking fountains, parking areas, irrigation and planting. These projects would increase the useful life of existing amenities, provide resource protection, and improve the visitor experience. Following is a list of specific projects:

Marvin Braude Mulholland Gateway Park

Presently the entrance to the Marvin Braude Mulholland Gateway Park is a temporary chainlink fence with concrete traffic bollards that cannot be secured. The MRCA needs to be able to close the park in the event of a fire or other incident impacting public safety. A new gate will also serve as a traffic calming device by forcing drivers to slow down before entering the park. While giving the MRCA the ability to close the park, the gate would normally remain open. The MRCA's Landscape Architecture Division has designed a large stone and wood entry similar to the gate at Joughin Ranch. This grant will enable the MRCA to implement the design.

Sage Ranch

Improvements contemplated under this grant at Sage Ranch include the installation of fencing and gates, the construction of a portable restroom enclosure and the removal of existing orange trees. Approximately 2500 linear feet of fencing is necessary in the park to provide better resource protection and public safety. The agency's standard lodgepole fencing would be installed along the roadway in the park to prevent off-road access to the northern end of the park. Some additional fencing around the ranger residence is necessary to limit public access. Fencing is also needed at the Sage campground to prevent campers from parking beneath the oak trees. New vehicle gates will be installed to better control public access and protect park resources. The enclosure around the portable restroom in the upper parking lot was destroyed in the 2005 brush fire. A new enclosure would provide much needed screening. The existing grove of orange trees in the park is diseased, and most of the trees are already dead. MRCA staff seeks to remove approximately 1000 dead and dying trees eliminating a future fire hazard.

Mulholland Overlook Enhancement Program

These overlooks include Hollywood Bowl Overlook, Universal Overlook, Nancy Hoover Pohl Overlook, Barbara Fine Summit Overlook, 13201 Mulholland Overlook, Lotte Melhorn Overlook and Stone Canyon Overlook.

The Mulholland Overlooks receive a high number of visitors year-round. The heavy public use of these small parks creates noticeable wear and tear on the facilities, and some of these overlooks suffer from chronic vandalism. The frequent use of items like benches and tables, signs, and irrigation equipment means that these elements have a shorter-than-normal lifetime, and require periodic replacement. MRCA staff seeks to improve public safety and visitor experience by restoring sight lines within the park and eliminating overgrown vegetation that blocks the views. Many site furnishings in the overlooks need replacement. These include benches, signs, drinking fountains, interpretive displays, and fencing. Parking areas in some of the overlooks need refurbishment to improve public safety. The interpretive displays in most of the overlooks need refurbishing. Staff would undertake the

redesign of the graphic materials and install new displays.

MRCA staff is currently evaluating several new methods of deterring vandalism and graffiti in the parks. The new measures include sensors tied to irrigation, lighting and cameras to prevent unwanted behavior in the parks. The Mulholland Overlooks, with their heavy visitor traffic, are perfect sites to employ many of these anti-vandalism devices. Many of these systems are specifically designed to work at night when much of the vandalism occurs.

Trail Enhancement

In multiple parks, major restoration and repair of trails and trailheads is necessary. Restoration will include reestablishment of eroded trail surfaces, removal of vegetation overgrowth, stabilization of slopes, replacement of damaged site features including benches and drinking fountains, and installation of regulatory and interpretive signage and wayside displays. Most of the work will be completed with MRCA staff. Interpretive displays at many of the trailheads need to be updated. MRCA interpretive and planning staff will work to redesign and produce these informative pieces.

A comprehensive list of the parks needing trail and trailhead enhancement will be included in the application to the Conservancy. The list will most likely include the following parks among others: Corral Canyon Park, Ed Edelman Park, Elyria Canyon, Escondido Canyon Park, Dixie Canyon Park, Gettyview Trailhead, Wilacre Park, Las Virgenes View Trail, and Rocky Peak.

Consideration: The application to the Conservancy would be in the amount of \$400,000.